



## O.E. "Gene" Davis

February 18, 1917 - August 15, 2010

Services are 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 21, at Montgomery Viets Funeral Home. Burial is in Mount Pleasant Cemetery under the direction of Montgomery-Viets Funeral Home of Buffalo. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Old Mount Pleasant Cemetery Fund, Fraker Cemetery Fund or Buffalo Riddick Lodge 361.

Visitation is 6 to 8:30 p.m. Friday at the funeral home.

Escorts are the brethren of the Buffalo Riddick Lodge 361. Honorary escorts are Keith Cully, Jerry Cox, Don Woods Sr., Don Woods Jr., Wayne Rieschel, Harold Barnett, Pepper Davies and David McHenry.

O.E. "Gene" Davis was born Feb. 18, 1917, in Flintridge, the fifth child of John Henry and Lula Ann (Creek) Davis. He died Aug. 15, 2010, at St. John's Hospital, Springfield.

The Davis family represents 300 years of Americans; the first arrived in Pennsylvania from Wales in 1701. The clan moved to Kentucky in 1790 and came to Missouri with Daniel Boone in 1799. Grandpa Jonathan married Mahala and Uncle James Davis married Jemima Hayes, Daniel Boone's granddaughters.

He began school at Flintridge at age 5. A gifted student, he completing eighth grade by age 11. His father worried he was not getting enough out of school and insisted he repeat the seventh and eighth grades, which he did in one year.

Buffalo High School was more than seven miles from his home and he had no

transportation. Considering this his father decided that Gene was done with school.

He went to work and, like his brothers, helped support the family by cutting wood for post and rail fencing. He also hunted and trapped anything with a pelt of value or meat fit to eat.

He worked loading gravel trucks with a scoop shovel for 50 cents a day. By age 13, he had a regular job working and living on a dairy farm. He milked 10 cows by hand in the morning and got the milk cans out to the road. He then plowed the fields with a three-horse hitch, cutting, raking and stacking the hay with forks. He would then milk the cows again in the evening.

He would walk five miles home to Flintridge on Friday and back to the farm on Sunday.

Throughout his teens, he worked with his older brothers, Walt and Grub, on their trucks.

At age 17, he picked up milk cans at dairies all along the country road. It was on one of these runs that he first saw Nettie Mae Hoover, a 14-year-old freckle-faced girl.

In 1936, he along with other family members headed west to California. They arrived in Moorepark, Calif. After searching the area for work and finding none, they headed north to San Juaquin Valley. He found work on the Bell Ranch picking fruits and vegetables and running the heavy equipment.

He eventually got a job at Ed Williams Garage and Filling Station in Moorepark. Williams told him about an opportunity he had to buy 3,000 acres of barren ranch land for \$5,000. Gene said it was a lot of money, but since they weren't making any more land he'd do it if he had the money. Williams bought the land, and in the 1960s his widow sold the acreage for \$1,500,000. He worked as an auto mechanic at Moorepark Ford Garage. He was the only mechanic local farmer and actor Joel McRae would allow to work on his 1937 V-12 Lincoln Zepher.

In 1938 he returned to Missouri for an extended vacation where he met Nettie again and they fell in love. They were united in marriage on Aug. 2, 1938, in

Dallas County and spent the next 51 plus years together.

He went to work for his father-in-law, and then he worked at the Ford garage earning \$10 a week. He started doing carpentry work, earning a \$1 an hour, and bought their first 40-acre farm.

He became a gypsy carpenter, working on Fort Leonard Wood, Camp Crowder, and Army camps in Mascogie, Okla., and Pando Valley, Colo. He also worked on other government jobs.

He built their dream home in 1948, a two-story home on a hill. It burnt along with all their belongings in 1951.

He tried to join the military but was never able to pass the physicals. In 1951, he was diagnosed with degenerative arthritis and a problem with the pericardium of his heart.

They eventually moved to Buffalo, where he served as mayor, a deputy conservation agent and was the longest standing member of the Masonic Lodge of Dallas County, since June 6, 1942.

In 1954 he became a long haul semi-truck driver for Producers Creamery out of Springfield. He retired in 1978 after driving 5 million accident-free miles.

Being a conservationist, he heard of a stocking program in the early 1960s the Missouri Department of Conservation was launching for wild turkey. With 3,000 acres approved by the land owners, the state would release one tom and 12 hens. He assisted with getting 30,000 acres approved in this area for the release of 39 wild turkeys.

They traveled a great deal, spending winters in south Texas, Florida, Arizona and southern California.

After his wife's death in December 1989, he spent the winter and spring of 1990 in California. He worked as an extra in movies and TV.

At the age of 75, he took down his first big horn sheep while on a sheep and wild boar hunt in the Tahachapie Mountains of California., and his 81-year-old brother, Walter, took a wild boar.

He meet Norma Jean Portwood Salmon at Truman Lake, and they were

married April 29, 1995, in Warsaw. They spent winters in Brownsville, Texas, and spring, summer and fall between Buffalo and their lake house in Warsaw. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Nettie; two daughters: Nancy Jean Guenther and Judy Woods; two grandsons: Louren Lee Dusty Guenther and David Smith; one great-grandchild; three brothers; and three sisters.

Survivors include his wife, Jeannie, Warsaw; two sons: John David (JD) Davis, Tujunga, Calif., and Gary Lee Davis, Buffalo and Piru, Calif.; seven grandchildren: Jeana and husband, Jody Lane and Sherra Zouck, all of Buffalo, Angela and husband, Jerry Gregory, Lees Summit, Scott Davis, Piru, Calif., Deanna and husband, Mark Mathews, Phillipsburg, Jake Campbell Davis, Shaddow Hills, Calif., and Samantha Konieczny, Lonedell; 16 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren; one stepson, Calvin and wife, Connie Salmon, Buffalo; three step-grandchildren; and 10 step-great-grandchildren.

# Tribute Wall



“ O.E. "Gene" Davis

October 09, 2023 at 12:27 PM



“ O.E. "Gene" Davis

October 09, 2023 at 04:09 AM



“ O.E. "Gene" Davis

October 05, 2023 at 11:14 PM



“ O.E. "Gene" Davis

October 05, 2023 at 05:41 PM



“ O.E. "Gene" Davis

December 20, 2022 at 10:20 AM